



**State of Washington  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

Habitat Program: 600 Capitol Way N, Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 - (360) 902-2534

**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE  
AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF EIS**

**Working Title of Proposal:** WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE (WDFW) STATEWIDE STEELHEAD RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (RMP) WITH A CURRENT FOCUS ON PUGET SOUND, WASHINGTON.

**Description of Proposal:** The Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife is developing a statewide steelhead resource management plan to address hatchery, harvest, and monitoring actions needed for continued steelhead population preservation and recovery. Consistent with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), the WDFW will complete a phased review. The first phase is a non-project proposal, which assesses potential environmental impacts of strategies designed to improve hatchery, harvest, and monitoring actions pertaining to steelhead programs in the Puget Sound steelhead Distinct Population Segment (DPS) including detailed summaries of approximately ten watersheds. This Puget Sound steelhead DPS is identified by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the March 26, 2006 Federal Register Notice proposal to list Puget Sound steelhead (71 FR 15666). WDFW is currently focusing on watersheds within Puget Sound. Detailed summaries of steelhead watersheds in other regions of Washington State will be addressed at a later date.

**Proponent:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, **Project Contact:** Steelhead RMP Project Manager, Amilee Wilson, at 360-902-2856 or email [wilsoalw@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:wilsoalw@dfw.wa.gov)

**Location of Proposal, including street, if any:** All affected steelhead populations in the Puget Sound area included in the Puget Sound steelhead Distinct Population Segment (DPS) identified by NOAA Fisheries in the Federal Register notice "Listing Endangered and Threatened Species and Designating Critical Habitat: 12-month Finding on Petition to List Puget Sound Steelhead as an Endangered or Threatened Species under the Endangered Species Act" (70 FR 15670). This steelhead DPS includes all natural populations below natural and man-made impassable barriers, in streams in the river basins of Puget Sound, Hood Canal, Strait of Juan de Fuca, bounded to the west by the Elwha River and to the north by the Nooksack River and Dakota Creek (all inclusive), including Green River natural and Hamma Hamma winter-run hatchery steelhead stocks.

**Lead Agency:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

**EIS Required:** The Lead Agency recognizes the potential for this proposal to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, consistent with RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c), an environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared to analyze the potentially adverse impacts of this proposal.

Many impacts have already been reviewed in the WDFW Draft Steelhead Management Plan (Draft EIS, March 1994), the Wild Salmonid Policy (Final EIS, September 2004) and the Puget Sound Harvest Resource Management Plan (March 2004).

**The lead agency had identified the following areas for discussion in the EIS:**

- Proposed listed steelhead species, wild and hatchery stocks
- Recreational and tribal fishing
- Hatchery programs and production of native and hatchery fish

**Purpose:**

**WDFW will develop strategies to improve the abundance and productivity of Puget Sound steelhead through the examination of WDFW hatcheries, harvest, and research/monitoring programs.**

The assessment and recommended strategies will further be outlined in detailed summaries of the Puget Sound watersheds.

The WDFW manages steelhead populations statewide according to a number of policies and directives, including the WDFW agency policies, the Fish and Wildlife Commission, North of Falcon, Wild Salmonid Restoration Initiative, Hatchery Reform, Selective Fisheries as well as Legislative mandates through the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC). Though hatchery, harvest, and monitoring improvements under these policies may be achieved without the aid of planning, the ability to demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of cumulative management actions is improved with the aid of a formalized planning process.

**Need:**

**This steelhead plan proposal is needed in order to restore and protect the diversity and long-term productivity of Washington's steelhead populations and their habitats. WDFW will accomplish this goal within the guidance of the agency's mission statement, strategic goals and objectives. Goals may include supporting hatchery programs that provide maximum recreational opportunities compatible with healthy diverse fish and wildlife populations. WDFW must also work with Tribal governments to ensure fish and wildlife management objectives are met including sustaining ceremonial, subsistence, commercial and recreational fisheries; non-consumptive fish benefits; and other related cultural and ecological values.** Objectives consistent with WDFW's Mission Statement and Strategic Goals and Objectives can be viewed online: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/mission.htm> or [http://wdfw.wa.gov/depinfo/strat\\_goals\\_obj.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/depinfo/strat_goals_obj.htm).

The Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife will address the need to develop a comprehensive statewide steelhead resource management plan beginning with a detailed analysis of WDFW programs within the Puget Sound DPS as identified by NOAA Fisheries March 26, 2006 Federal Register Notice proposal to list Puget Sound steelhead (71 FR 15666). WDFW will address this need by focusing on the following objectives:

- 1) Evaluate steelhead hatchery programs within the Puget Sound steelhead DPS to determine potential risks to natural steelhead populations and develop programs that will aid in their conservation.
- 2) Evaluate current steelhead harvest management practices and determine if conservation measures are needed to improve the natural production of steelhead included in the Puget Sound DPS.
- 3) Identify information gaps and develop research and monitoring projects in order to better evaluate the future viability of steelhead populations in the Puget Sound DPS.

There are increasing expectations for fish program managers to balance varied public needs to support commercial, tribal and recreational harvest opportunities, revenue production, fish habitat requirements, and other social-cultural and environmental values. WDFW will develop a Puget Sound steelhead resource management plan to evaluate current hatchery and harvest practices to recommend necessary changes within those programs in order to aid in the conservation of natural populations of Puget Sound steelhead. The department must also identify information gaps pertaining to natural steelhead populations and develop research and monitoring programs to improve resource management decisions.

In order for an alternative to be considered in the Puget Sound steelhead planning process, its strategies must meet the stated purpose and need (see page 1). The following objectives for the Puget Sound steelhead resource management plan used to evaluate potential alternatives are:

1. Provide hatchery programs that support the viability of natural populations of Puget Sound steelhead
  - a) Specify hatchery strategy type program recommendations for steelhead. Those may include integrated, isolated or where necessary, no hatchery programs.
  - b) Evaluate possible areas for steelhead kelt reconditioning
  - c) Evaluate areas for the designation of wild fish management zones
2. Evaluate current commercial, recreational and tribal harvest to ensure natural populations of Puget Sound steelhead meet conservation objectives.
3. Identify needed research and monitoring programs to evaluate the viability of natural populations of Puget Sound steelhead
  - a) Steelhead stock assessment
  - b) Quantification of harvest mortality rates
  - c) Juvenile production monitoring
  - d) Changes in marine climate conditions

The Puget Sound RMP must additionally achieve the following secondary objectives, which are essential for the administration of the plan and the implementation of the recommendations:

- Provide adaptive management through feedback and communication that refine strategies and outcomes as appropriate
- Foster communication and transparency concerning WDFW management activities

Possible Performance Criteria – those against which alternative steelhead resource management strategies may be evaluated based on their efficiency and effectiveness at attaining the above stated objectives. Evaluation criteria may include:

- Cost and resources required to implement strategies
- Evaluation of environmental effects of strategies on natural resources

**Scoping.** Agencies, affected tribes and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. The method and deadline for giving us your comments are:

Submit written or oral comments at any of the public meetings listed below, or submit written comments to:

**SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, Regulatory Services Section, Habitat Program  
600 Capitol Way North  
Olympia, WA 98501**

Comments submitted via email format will not be accepted. Written comments should be received at the address listed no later than

**September 12, 2006.**

If you have any questions about the project, please contact the Steelhead RMP Project Manager, Amilee Wilson, at 360-902-2856 or email [wilsoalw@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:wilsoalw@dfw.wa.gov). If you have questions regarding the scoping process, please contact the SEPA Coordinator, Teresa Eturaspe, at 360-902-2575 or email: [habitatSEPA@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:habitatSEPA@dfw.wa.gov)

**Notice of Public Meetings:**

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife encourages your active participation in this EIS process. The schedule for public meetings is as follows:

Olympia: Wednesday, August 30, 2006  
TIME: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM  
Natural Resource Building  
1111 Washington Street SE  
Olympia, WA 98504

Mount Vernon: Friday, September 8, 2006  
TIME: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM  
Mount Vernon Public Utilities Office (PUD)  
1415 Freeway Drive  
Mount Vernon, WA

Tukwila: Monday, September 11, 2006  
TIME: 6:00PM – 8:00 PM  
Tukwila Community Center  
12424 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S.  
Tukwila, WA 98168

Port Angeles: Thursday, September 14, 2006  
TIME: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM  
Port Angeles Public Library  
2210 South Peabody Street  
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Ellensburg: Friday, September 22, 2006  
TIME: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM  
Hal Holmes Community Center  
209 Ruby Street  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

**Responsible Official:** Teresa A. Eturaspe

**Position/Title:** SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, Regulatory Services Section, Habitat Program

**Address:** 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501

**DATE OF ISSUE:** August 22, 2006

**SIGNATURE:** 